Press release | 09.11.2023

Nature Restoration Law: Negotiations enter the final round

Today, trilogue negotiations between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on the Nature Restoration Law is expected to be finalised. The negotiators start at 2 p.m, with an open end time. The Environment Committee is expected to vote on the outcome of the negotiations on 29 November, with the final plenary vote scheduled for the beginning of 2024.

Jutta Paulus, shadow rapporteur for the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament, comments:

"An intact nature is the basis for biodiversity, for food security and for the livelihood of our farmers. The greatest threats to agriculture and livelihoods are climate change, drought, fires and floods, the dramatic extinction of species and the destruction of nature. We Greens/EFA appeal to all political groups to get their act together and agree on a sustainable negotiation result today. The European Parliament must not fall any further behind the European Commission's proposal and the Council's position. The Green Deal must remain the benchmark.

The EU must fulfil the international commitments it promised at the UN Biodiversity Conference and the UN Climate Conference. In view of the upcoming UN Climate Conference in Dubai, it would be a disastrous signal if the EU does not honour its own agreements."

For the final round of negotiations, the Greens/EFA call for:

- Peatlands: As natural CO2 sinks for climate mitigation and critical ecosystems for species conservation, peatlands must be part of the negotiated solution.
- Non-deterioration requirement: Restored areas must remain exempt from development, for example, otherwise money invested in nature restoration will be wasted.
- Emergency brake: Restoration measures must not be stopped if food prices rise, as the reasons for price fluctuations are complex and yield losses are only accelerated by species extinction and climate impacts.
- Oceans: The mechanism for designating marine restoration areas through joint recommendations from member states must be improved. If member states do not agree, the Commission should still, in urgent cases, be able to adopt measures.
- Natura 2000 areas: The application of the Restoration Law exclusively to Natura 2000 areas, as demanded by the EPP, would unnecessarily restrict the scope of the new law and thus the number of valuable ecosystems to be restored.

Background

Negotiations on the Nature Restoration Law began in July. Before the European Parliament's position was adopted by a narrow majority, the EPP organised a major campaign against the planned law and joined forces with the far right, voting against it in plenary.

The Nature Restoration Law is part of the Green Deal and the EU Biodiversity Strategy, and is the first major nature conservation law in over 20 years. The law is a prerequisite for achieving the EU's climate and species protection targets. It is intended to counteract the climate- and ecologically induced degradation of agricultural soils and ecosystems, slow down the progressive extinction of native species and guarantee sufficient yields for farmers and affordable food for consumers in the future. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 30-50% of carbon-rich ecosystems such as peatlands and forests must be restored in order to limit global warming to below two degrees Celsius.

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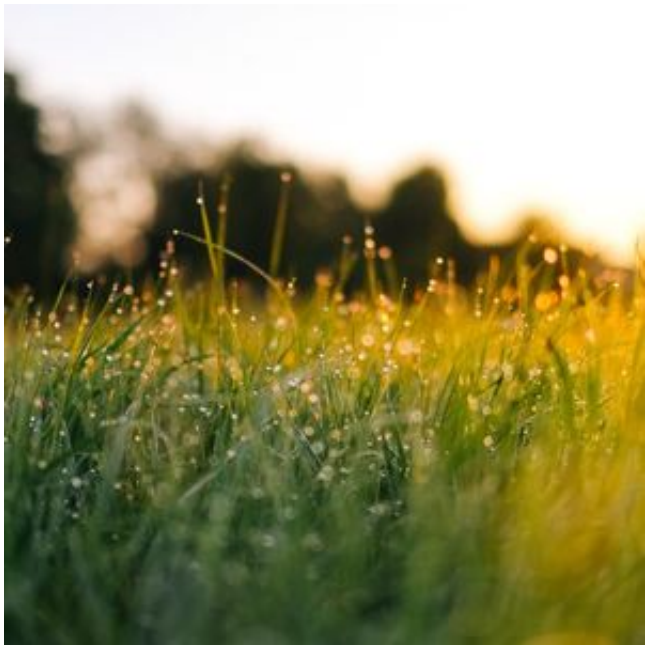
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